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THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

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"If this Book of Mormon is true, then God is a personal being, there are angels in heaven that are personal beings, and they have visited the earth; and if this book is not true, 'Mormonism' is a fraud."—JOSEPH F. MERRILL.

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MOTIVATING FORCE IN "MORMONISM"

ELDER JOHN HENRY EVANS

DE QUINCEY, a famous English essayist of the last century, has given us a helpful classification of books.

On the one side he places works on history, philosophy, science and the like. To these we go for information chiefly. They form the class which he calls "the literature of knowledge." On the other side he puts works on poetry, fiction, the drama, and religion. These interest us because of their large appeal to our feelings. They constitute, in De Quincey's phrase, "the literature of power." In the one case we get ideas; in the other, a motivating force.

Now in the history of religion one book stands out as a supreme example of the literature of power. It is the New Testament. Certainly between the time of Jesus and the time of Joseph Smith there is no book that compares with it in its influence on human life.

Let me give an instance of what I mean.

A few years ago there was held in San Francisco a convention of police executives and social workers from every part of the United States and Canada. The general theme of the gathering was how to restore the inmates of our prisons to good citizenship. Papers on various aspects of the subject were read and freely discussed.

Toward the end of the session a man rose in the body of the hall and asked to speak. On being granted this privilege, he told the following story about himself:

“For some twenty years,” he began, “I was myself a criminal. One time and another I have been in most of the jails and penitentiaries of the nation. I had committed every crime on the calendar, with one exception. The longer I stayed in prison the harder I became in my feelings and purpose. During my last incarceration I came to hate everything and everybody—the officers, the law, the government, society. And I vowed that, if ever I obtained my freedom, I would wreak as frightful a vengeance on society as it was in my power to do.

“One day a woman came to the door of my cell and tried to engage me in conversation. I refused to say a word. Finally, in disappointment, she said, ‘There is a book; promise me that you will read it through.’ More to get rid of her than for any other reason, I gave her my promise, and took the book. I threw it violently into the farthest corner of the cell, and there it lay gathering dust for many months.

“Every time, during those weary days, that my eyes fell on the book, what little conscience I had gave a twinge. I had given the promise in deceit, and the woman had accepted it in good faith. So one morning I began to read it. It was the New Testament.

“Gradually, as I read, I felt a change coming over me. The feeling was imperceptible at first, but in the end it utterly overwhelmed me. I was a changed man. No longer did I hate any one or any thing. In the place of hate there was love. In shame and humiliation I fell to my knees and made a fresh vow. I told God that if He would bring about my freedom, I would spend the rest of my days trying to get men in my condition to see the light as it had so mysteriously come to me. Faithfully I have kept that vow.

ONLY ONE THING THAT CAN MAKE GOOD CITIZENS

“And so I want to say to you now,” he concluded, “that there is only one thing that can change men and women from the criminal life to good citizenship, and that is the Spirit of Jesus Christ as it is embodied in this little book, the New Testament.”

It is not, however, of the New Testament that I wish to speak on this occasion. I have dwelt thus long on the spirit of that volume because it furnishes a standard by which to measure books that belong in the class which De Quincey calls the literature of power. And so I wish now to direct attention, if I may, to another book, a modern volume, if you please, which I believe deserves a place by the side of the New Testament because of its influence on the human heart. It is the Book of Mormon.

Those of you who are not familiar with the influence the Book of Mormon has exerted on the lives of Latter-day Saints will perhaps be surprised at this statement. Some of you may even be shocked. But I think that this is perfectly defensible. Just

now, however, I propose only to relate some instances to show how nearly the Book of Mormon parallels that of the four Gospels.

In 1829, while the Book of Mormon was in the press, there came to Palmyra, Western New York State, a man whose name was Thomas B. Marsh. His home was in Boston, Massachusetts, but at Lyonstown, on his way to New York City on business, he had heard of the new prophet who had arisen in Palmyra. So, abandoning his business trip, he hurried to that little western town for the purpose of seeing the man who laid claims to having had a vision. Marsh did not see the Prophet at the time, but he did meet two of the Prophet's companions—Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris. From these men he received the first form-proof of the Book of Mormon, which he read prayerfully to his wife, as soon as he reached his home. The two were converted and joined the Church in the spring. Marsh became ranking apostle in the new Faith.

It was the Book of Mormon, too, that converted Brigham Young. He borrowed the volume from his friend, the Rev. John P. Greene, who in turn had borrowed it from the Prophet's brother, Samuel H. Smith. Samuel had gone into the neighbourhood for the purpose of selling books, but had succeeded only in lending them or giving them away, for the price of each was two dollars and fifty cents (approximately ten shillings). This one book brought into the Church, not only the great pioneer, but also Mr. and Mrs. Greene, and, if I am not mistaken, Brigham Young's closest friend, Heber C. Kimball.

BOOK OF MORMON CONVERTS PARLEY P. PRATT

About this same time there was living in Ohio a farmer by the name of Parley P. Pratt. Pratt had only recently joined the Campbellite faith, through the efforts of the Rev. Sidney Rigdon, a Campbellite preacher of great reputation on the Western reserve. A gifted writer and public speaker, Pratt made up his mind to enter the ministry. He was on the way to his old home in New York to obtain the necessary training, when he came upon a copy of the Book of Mormon. On reading it he became convinced of its truth, and hastened to see its author. He joined the Church, was ordained an Elder, and began to immediately preach the new faith.

One of his first converts was his brother, Orson. The direct means of the conversion was the new book. Orson, after being baptized, was given the Priesthood and sent on a mission, which took him through six states. Although but nineteen at the time, he walked every foot of the four thousand miles, preaching and baptizing.

A little later than this a man named Willard Richards, a practising physician in Boston, ran upon a copy of the Book of Mormon

in the home of a cousin. Opening it at random, he read a few pages. When he had finished, he exclaimed, "Either God or the devil had a hand in that book, for man never wrote it." He borrowed the volume and read it through twice in ten days. Thereupon he gave up his practice, joined the Church, and went to the main body of "Mormons" in Ohio.

In the sixties there lived in Pennsylvania a boy by the name of George Ottinger. George's parents were determined that he should be a physician, but he was equally determined that he would be an artist. The dispute growing hot, he ran away from home and did not return till he was of age. He joined the navy, cruised on the seven seas, and meantime practised drawing and painting. His particular interest was ancient American subjects.

After his return home, a friend suggested the Book of Mormon, rather derisively, it would seem, as a source of subjects. He bought a copy. But instead of thinking of his art as he read, his mind lost itself in the theological doctrines and spirit of the book. In a little while he joined the "Mormons" in the west, and became the first professor of art in the University of Utah.

ORSON SPENCER—A GRADUATE OF TWO COLLEGES

Perhaps the most striking case of the kind we are now considering is that of the Rev. Orson Spencer. A graduate of two colleges, Spencer had a flourishing congregation in a Massachusetts town, of which the governor of the state was a member. Scholarly, enthusiastic, eloquent, young Spencer was fast riding into influence in the Baptist church. His defection to the despised Latter-day Saints created a sensation throughout New England.

When the nature and origin of the Book of Mormon was called to his attention by his brother, Daniel, who had himself gone through a dramatic struggle with his conscience, the minister bought a copy and read it through thoughtfully and prayerfully. He was converted. This is how he described his inner battle to the editor of the *Boston Christian Watchman*:

"The Spirit of God wrought mightily in me, commending the ancient gospel to my conscience. I contemplated it with peaceful serenity and joy in believing. But when I allowed my selfish propensities to speak, I cursed 'Mormonism' in my heart, and regretted being in possession of as much light and knowledge as had flowed into my mind from that source.

"I counted the cost, to myself and family, of embracing such views, until I could read it like a child his alphabet, either upward or downward. The expense I viewed through unavoidable tears, both in public and private, by night and by day. I said, however, the Lord He is God, I can, I will, embrace the truth.

"What could I do? Truth had taken possession of my mind—

plain, simple, Bible truth. It might be asked if I could not expel it from my door?

"Yes, I could do it. But how would that harmonize with a sincere profession to preach and practise the truth, by way of example to others? It was a crisis I never shall, I never can forget. I remember it as an exodus from parents, kindred, denomination and temporal support. Has anyone ever passed such a crisis, he will say, at least, be careful of Brother Spencer's character and feelings."

These men of whom I have been speaking were not, to be sure, great sinners, as the man was whom I mentioned in connection with the New Testament. Certainly they were not criminals in any sense of the word. But the changes that took place in their inner life and in their outer fortunes were none the less profound on that account. As a matter of fact, they were in reality making far greater sacrifices for their faith—as the history of the Latter-day Saints abundantly proves.

DRAMATIC NEW STARTS IN LIFE

In addition, however, to demanding rather dramatic new starts in life on the part of tens of thousands of men and women in the "Mormon" Church, the Book of Mormon has exerted a profound influence on individual members of the organization in the shaping of character. The Prophet Joseph Smith set great store by the Record from this angle. "A man," he said on one occasion, "can live closer to God by living in accordance with the spirit and precepts of the Book of Mormon than in any other way." And tens of thousands of his followers have demonstrated the truth of this statement.

But the Book of Mormon has done more to convert men and women to revealed religion and reshape their character afterwards in the direction of stricter righteousness. It has exercised a profound influence in forming policies for a whole commonwealth. I am thinking now of the relations between the "Mormon" people and the Indians in the early days of Utah.

Every one knows how the native races have been treated by Americans, particularly in the United States. A record of that treatment forms one of the most shameful chapters in our history. The Indians have been driven time and again from their hunting grounds; they have been lied to; they have been treated with gross injustice everywhere. In the early west the white man had no more scruple in shooting down an Indian than if he had been a buffalo or a bear.

Very naturally the natives resented this treatment, and in consequence a bitter feeling grew up between the white and the dark race. Injustice and cruelty on the part of the American were met by cunning and treachery on the part of the native.

That was not the attitude of the "Mormon" settlers toward the

Indians. Brigham Young sought to have his people treat the natives with kindness and consideration and justice. It was not only safer to feed than to fight them, but it was better. More than that, Governor Young sent men like Jacob Hamblin to teach them agriculture, industry, letters, and religion. In Utah alone there was an absolute horror felt for the killing of an Indian—except, of course, in self-defense.

This attitude on the part of the Latter-day Saints met with a generous response by the natives. They learned to discriminate between the average American and the "Mormon." And the authorities in Washington informed Brigham Young, who was Indian agent in addition to governor, that the natives were better behaved in his territory than they were anywhere else.

"MORMONS'" SUPERIOR WAYS WITH THE INDIANS

Where did the "Mormons" get their superior ways with the Indian? Clearly from the Book of Mormon. For in that volume they read that the native races of America were descended from Israelites; that their present degenerate condition was due to wrong-headed leadership in the first place and then to a lack of opportunity for progress; that at the time the history of their ancestors should make its appearance, the work of their conversion would begin; and that in the end they would receive Christ, become a "white and delightsome people," and take a major part in consummating the work of God in the last days. And reading these things, the "Mormons" endeavoured in every way to carry out the obvious intentions of the record.

Just what is there about the Book of Mormon to have moved so powerfully the men of whom I have been speaking? It is an intriguing question. For many years I have searched the book for a single passage that would epitomize the spirit and genius of the whole volume, and I think that at last I have found one. It is in the writings of one of the minor prophets of the Lehtes. His name is Enos. Enos lived about four hundred years before Christ, was the son of Jacob and the grandson of Lehi, who brought his little band from Jerusalem. Here is the passage:

I will tell you of the wrestle I had before God before I received a remission of my sins.

Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forest; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life and the joy of the Saints, sunk deep into my heart. My soul hungered. And I knelt down before my Maker and cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul. All the day long did I cry unto him, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

And there came a voice unto me, saying, "Enos, thy sins are forgiven, and thou shalt be blessed." And I said, "Lord, how is it done?" And he said unto me. "Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before seen nor heard. Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Now, when I had heard these words, I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites. Wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them. And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, the voice of the Lord came unto me saying, "I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments."

After I had heard these words, I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites. And after I had prayed and laboured with diligence, the Lord said unto me, "I will grant unto thee according to thy desires." Now, this was the thing which I had desired of him, that if my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression and be destroyed, the Lamanites, if they should be preserved, might be brought unto salvation by the power of his holy arm.

THREE BASIC CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

If you will examine this passage, which I have somewhat abridged, you will find three basic Christian principles embedded in it.

First, the duty of personal knowledge, so far as spiritual things are concerned. Enos tells us that he had heard religion spoken of by his father, Jacob. Doubtless he had heard the Gospel from others as well—it may be his uncle, the great Nephi, and his grandfather, Lehi. But that was only second-hand information at best; it was not knowledge. He wanted to know for himself; he wanted to have an experience, which alone gives knowledge.

Second, the duty of personal righteousness. As soon as Enos came to know, as soon as his eyes were opened to spiritual truth, he sought a forgiveness of his sins, so that he might have a fresh start in life. His conversion had put into his heart a passion for righteousness. He would cast off the old and put on the new man.

Third, the duty of service. It was not enough that he should himself be saved. There were others in the world. And so he prayed as fervently, and laboured, too, he says, for the salvation, first of the Nephites and then of the Lamanites—both of whom just then stood sorely in need of regeneration.

These three things—personal knowledge, personal righteousness and personal service—lie as foundation stones in the structure of revealed religion. And they lie alike in the heart of the New Testament and of the Book of Mormon. There are no deeper principles of the spiritual life here below.

In view of what we have been considering it should be clear that if any one is seeking evidence of the divine origin of the Book of Mormon, he will find the evidence, not in any reasoning process, but rather in the volume itself and in his own heart. If he reads the book in an enquiring frame of mind, it will become more and more apparent as he reads, that the Book of Mormon originated, not with Solomon Spaulding or Sidney Rigdon, nor even with Joseph Smith, but with God, who is the ultimate source of all spiritual truth.—(Address delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A., November 13th, 1932.)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1932

EDITORIAL

TWENTIETH CENTURY INTOLERANCE

THE attitude of the British press towards the Church and our missionaries is generally very friendly, in contrast with that of a few years ago, when whole columns of articles, with startling headlines, embodying falsehoods of the most malicious nature, were published against us. It is very rare that one finds anything particularly objectionable in the press of to-day. Occasionally some small religious organ, edited by a local pastor, or a newspaper of limited circulation, echoes the stories current a half century ago, but otherwise the influential press of this country is practically free from any vituperation and malicious misrepresentation of the "Mormon" people. Indeed, they are very generous in giving publicity to legitimate and favourable news stories affecting our Church organization. This is especially true with reference to our conferences, where the frequent attendance of newspaper representatives show a personal interest in securing unprejudiced accounts of these gatherings and the doctrines expounded there. In a number of instances, leading newspapers in the large cities have published group pictures of our Elders and Mission Authorities, three or four columns wide, on the front pages of their papers.

With every opportunity for rapid communication between all parts of the world, the unlimited facilities for securing truthful information on vital issues, the personal contact with people and conditions in all lands by men of recognized international standing, it is small wonder that real truth concerning the "Mormon" people, their virtues and accomplishments and objectives, should not be more generally understood and recognized.

In view of these increasing favourable conditions, it is almost unbelievable that an ordinary intelligent being would write and publish an editorial such as the following, which appeared in a recent issue of the *South London Observer*, a rural paper published in one of the outlying suburbs of that city :

A WARNING TO WOMEN

We are all in favour of the liberty of the subject ; of the free expression, without let or hindrance, of religious and political opinion. Nevertheless we view with considerable misgiving the threatened invasion of these shores by a whole army of specially trained "Mormon" missionaries bent upon obtaining recruits for the harems of Utah. Although to the vast majority of people the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (to give the "Mormon" Church its full and correct title) are re-

pulsive, the bland arguments of pleasant spoken "Mormon" missionaries are apt to carry conviction to emotional women. Similar invasions in the past have been followed by the wrecking of British homes, by the loss of a daughter and wives who have been spirited away to the "Mormon" city. We are told that on this occasion the missionaries anticipate a rich harvest in the industrial centres in the North and in parts of Wales. They are even so hopeful of London that they dream of making the Metropolis the centre of their organization on this side of the Atlantic. We sincerely hope that that dream will not be fulfilled, and that some means will be found of convincing the missionaries when they arrive that their room is preferred to their company. Women would do well to beware of the blandishments of the missionaries, and fathers and husbands who catch them on their thresholds might do worse than apply their boots to a suitable part of the "Mormon's" anatomy.

We made a personal visit to this editor, and spent considerable time in an effort to clear away the prejudice he had toward our people; and to show him the untruthfulness of the statements made in his article, we took with us unimpeachable evidence for this purpose. He emphatically told us there was nothing we could do or say or adduce that would change his attitude; that his mind was made up and that he was against our religion on general principles. He defended what he insisted was his right to attack us in any way he wanted to, in order to protect his patrons and friends from the "blight of 'Mormonism.'"

It is indeed rare that one finds such pronounced bigotry, especially with one who occupies such a position as does this individual. Fair-minded men are generally willing to admit their error, when the untruthfulness and injustice of their position is shown them. Such men grow and develop, and become of worth in their communities; while the other class stagnate, become hateful, and lack love for their fellow-beings, while any movement for the benefit of humanity is looked upon by them with suspicion.—JAMES H. WALLIS.

CORRECTION.—The editorial in the last issue of the *Star*, signed "H. I.," was written by Elder Hugh Ireland, of the *Liahona*.

PRIESTHOOD

THE month of January will be taken up in the second month of our Review of *Studies in Priesthood*. We will devote one week to public speaking as usual.

First Week. Opening exercises. Ten-minute report of Priesthood activities. Lesson: *Studies in Priesthood*. Review Chapters V and VI. Discuss the requirements fitting to a holder of the Priesthood of God, and the duties and authority that devolve upon the holders of various offices in the Priesthood.

Second Week. Opening exercises. Ten-minute report of Priesthood activities. Lesson: *Studies in Priesthood*. Review Chap-

ters VII and VIII. Become familiar with the organization and government of the Church as a whole and your mission branch in particular.

Third Week. Opening exercises. Ten-minute report of Priesthood activities. Two twelve-minute talks, assignments to be made a week in advance. First, "The Priesthood as the Foundation and Stabilizing Influence Within the Mission Branch," references: *Branch Supervision*, page 41, *Studies in Priesthood*, Chapter 15; second, "Auxiliaries—Their Purpose and Place in the Branch," references: *Branch Supervision*, pages 35-41, *Studies in Priesthood*, page 41. Use any Church works for supplementary material and apply the talks to your local conditions. A class discussion should follow in which all should be urged to participate.

Fourth Week. Opening exercises. Ten-minute report of Priesthood activities. Lesson: *Studies in Priesthood*. Review Chapters IX and X. Come to an understanding of the activity and service of the Priesthood within the branch and mission.—R. S. E.

RELIEF SOCIETY

First Week. Opening exercises. Preliminary programme. A ten-minute talk: "How we may ameliorate our lives for the coming year by personal inventory of thoughts and actions."

Lesson text: *Theology—The Doctrine and Covenants—Lesson 4. "Vicarious Work for the Dead."* Objective: The principles of salvation for the dead have been restored, the vicarious ordinances being performed in Temples built at tremendous odds.

Second Week. Opening exercises. Preliminary programme. An instrumental solo or duet. Work and Business. Lesson text: *Teacher topics—The Beatitudes—Lesson 4.* Objective: Those who seek after good things with all their hearts shall gain lasting happiness.

Third Week. Opening exercises. Preliminary programme. This comprises short numbers, including a short biography and stories from poems and novels, thus giving a broad view of the genius of Sir Walter Scott. For information on above assignments, go to your local public libraries. Lesson text: *Literature—The Delight of Great Books.* Lesson 4. Objective: Scott's love for his country, its history, and the beauties of nature is revealed in his life through his literary accomplishments.

Fourth Week. Opening exercises. Preliminary programme. A talk on the Life of Louis Pasteur. Show clearly that it was his love for humanity that made his name immortal. See Encyclopedias or any good biography for material. Lesson text: *Social Service—Life Worth Living—Lesson 4. Centennial Tract No. 4. "Need of Church Organization."* Objective: A Church embodying all truth is indispensable to those who seek daily guidance and such a church has been restored to mankind.—RINTHA P. DOUGLAS.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

SACRAMENT GEM FOR JANUARY

I COME to Thee all penitent,
 I feel Thy love for me ;
 Dear Saviour, in this Sacrament
 I do remember Thee.

The Concert Recitation should be recited by the Gospel Doctrine Department before the school on the first, third and fifth Sundays, and by the New Testament Department on the second and fourth Sundays.

GOSPEL DOCTRINE DEPARTMENT.

January 1. Concert Recitation. (Doctrine and Covenants 1:37.) "Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled." Lesson 1. "The *Doctrine and Covenants*—Modern Scripture." The chief objective of this lesson is perhaps three-fold, as follows: (1) To show that the *Doctrine and Covenants* is truly a modern Scripture. (2) That it is far more accurate than ancient scriptures, and (3) That it is greatly needed.

January 8. Lesson 2. "Contents of the *Doctrine and Covenants*." The revelations contained in the *Doctrine and Covenants* were given at a time when the voice of God had been absent from the earth for nearly eighteen hundred years, and therefore they necessarily dealt with a wide variety of subjects.

January 15. Lesson 3. "History of the *Doctrine and Covenants*." It is important to observe that in every matter relating to content and publication of the *Doctrine and Covenants* the Prophet sought the advice and approval of his associates. Finally, when it was published it was presented to the Church for its action. This is in harmony with the attitude of the Lord in never forcing individuals to do anything against their will.

January 22. Lesson 4. "The Preface to the *Doctrine and Covenants*." The preface to the *Doctrine and Covenants* is regarded by most of those who are familiar with it as an ideal document for that purpose, since it contains a concise and comprehensive forecast of both the contents and purpose of the book.

January 29. Open Sunday. An opportunity to review lessons studied.

NEW TESTAMENT "A" DEPARTMENT

January 1. Concert Recitation. (John 5:30.) "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Lesson 1. "Introduction to the New

Testament." Text: Luke 1: 1-4. Objective: To develop understanding of the nature of the New Testament and appreciation of the great value of its contents.

January 8. Lesson 2. "John the Baptist, a forerunner of the Messiah." Texts: Matthew 11: 7-11; Luke 7: 24-28. Objective: To show that John came to prepare the way for the Messiah.

January 15. Lesson 3. "The Message of John the Baptist." Texts: Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*; Luke 3: 1-20; 7: 19-30; Mark 1: 1-5. Objective: To show that John's call to repentance foreshadowed Jesus' call to righteousness and service.

January 22. Lesson 4. "Jesus the Saviour of Mankind." Texts: Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*; John 7: 23-30; 10: 22-39; 7: 14-18. Objective: To develop faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

January 29. Lesson 5. "Jesus Came to Do the Will of the Father." Texts: Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, pages 609-617. John 17. Objective: To show that Jesus consecrated His life to the mission given Him of the Father.

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

January 1. Grand Review. Since this is the beginning of a New Year, it might be well to spend this period in a general review of the past work. In order to make this period interesting and instructive the teacher must carefully plan her work, making the lessons she chooses center around a great objective. The article in *The Instructor* for October, 1931, Primary Department, will offer some suggestive methods for conducting a review.

January 8. Lesson 41. "Elijah and King." Texts: I Kings 16: 29-32; 17: 18; Sunday School Lessons No. 41. Objective: Those who love and trust the Lord are entitled to the blessings of heaven.

January 15. Lesson 42. "Elijah and the Widow." Texts: I Kings 17: 8-16; Sunday School Lessons No. 42. Objective: Those who love and trust the Lord are entitled to the blessings of heaven.

January 22. Lesson 43. "Elijah and the Widow's Son." Texts: I Kings; Sunday School Lessons No. 43. Objective: Those who love and trust the Lord are entitled to the blessings of heaven.

January 29. Lesson 44. "Fire from Heaven." Text: I Kings 18: 1-40. Sunday School Lessons No. 44. Objective: To him that believeth, all things are possible.—*The Instructor*.

It is suggested that two and one-half minute talks be based upon the following topics: "What Can We Do to Improve Our Sunday School for the Coming Year?" and "Obedience to the Commandments of God is a Means of Freedom and not Bondage."

For singing practice during the month of January, the following songs are suggested: "All Hail the New-born Year!" and "O Happy is the Man Who Hears."—L. T. N.

MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

THERE has been some comment concerning the length and difficulty of the assigned lessons since it will be seen that we are expected to cover two whole chapters on some lesson nights. This is made necessary since it is desired that we cover this course during our regular winter season. Because of the nature of our lessons you have no doubt already found you cannot cover the assigned material unless the class is prepared in advance. For this reason, urge the members of your class to read and study the lessons before they come to class. It is absolutely necessary for an interesting and profitable lesson that all come prepared on the subject material. When a large lesson is assigned we will cut out one of the preliminary numbers to allow more lesson time. It is the desire of all concerned that we will be able to cover this wonderful course of lessons intelligently and to the best advantage of all. Mutual and class leaders should work toward this end.

SLOGAN: "We Stand For the Enrichment of Life Through Constructive Use of Leisure and Personal Service to Fellow Man."

First Night. Opening exercises. Slogan talk. Give some ideas for good New Year resolutions to adopt that would help us in our support of the slogan. Have each member present list one of the good resolutions they are going to keep throughout the coming year. Lesson: Chapter 12, "The Gods of this Earth," and Chapter 13, "Man's Communion with God." Objective: To present an idea of the Gods with whom we have to do, and the necessity and means of communication therewith.

1. What is the value to a man of the conception of God?
2. Explain the doctrine of the plurality of Gods through our aspect of eternal progress.
3. What is our relation to God the Father? God the Son? God the Holy Ghost?
4. Defend the statement in the song "Oh My Father," that states we have a Mother in heaven.
5. Why is "the will to ask" a basic principle of the communication between God and man?
6. How does modern science confirm belief in prayer? Elaborate.
7. What manner of record may be kept without writing?

Second Night. Opening exercises. Mutual Improvement social. Suggestive helps for an enjoyable evening will be sent out to you in the *January Game Supplement*.

Third Night. Opening exercises. Slogan talk. Elaborate upon the attitude of the Saviour toward personal service to fellow man. Follow this with a vocal solo. Lesson: Chapter 14, "Man Walks With God." Objective: To bring us to the realization of man's ability to get into harmony with God by proper methods and means.

1. Distinguish among truth, knowledge, understanding, wisdom and intelligence.

2. What is man's biggest problem concerning the message of the Lord? How can he solve it?

3. When is a person spiritually blind? What are the causes?

4. What part does "active prayer" play? Differentiate between active and passive prayer.

5. When can the gift of understanding be expected? Why is it so desirable?

6. How may we know that "we walk with God?"

Fourth Night. Opening exercises. Slogan talk. Present ways in which we can enrich our lives through use of our leisure time in constructive physical activities. Assign someone to give a five-minute biography of Wilford Woodruff. Follow this with a song or poem in native dialect. Lesson: Chapter 15, "The Kingdom of the Evil One." Objective: A brief outline of the forces of evil, the power and relationship they have with man.

1. What is a descending being?

2. Give the story of the Great Council as far as we know it? Who is the devil?

3. In what way has man power over the forces of the devil? Of what value is this?

4. Why must the devil be subject to God? In what ways is this condition the case?

Make assignments for preparation in advance. Use the appendix supplied to you in your manuals. Do everything within your power to make this a Happy Mutual Year. Here's to your success.—R. S. E.

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT CONFERENCE

A **SPLENDID** spirit pervaded throughout the three sessions of the Birmingham District Annual Fall Conference held in the Handsworth chapel, 23 Booth Street, Handsworth, Birmingham. After the administration of the sacrament and preliminary Sunday School exercises, the congregation separated. Local brethren and sisters gave reports concerning conditions in their respective departments, and several priesthood ordinations were performed. Valuable instructions pertaining to "Seeking After the Lost Sheep" and observing the law of tithing were given by President James H. Douglas and Patriarch James H. Wallis.

In the afternoon session the Authorities of the Church were presented and sustained. A report of the district activities was given by President Elwood Corry, who among other things stated that there had been a willingness on the part of the local brethren to go on circuit and speak at the meetings in the absence of missionaries. Tithing and Fast offerings for the past six months had shown a slight increase. Travelling missionaries had performed 10,674 hours of work; 1,544 hours traacting; 1,766

Gospel conversations, and had received 204 invitations into private homes to explain the Gospel. Along with other literature distributed, 41 copies of the Book of Mormon had been placed into the hands of those in search of truth. A short programme, summarizing the Plan of Salvation under three topics: "Where We Came From," "Why We Are Here" and "Where Do We Go After Death," was effectively given by three local brethren. Brief addresses by the missionaries, bearing on the theme, "Divine Revelation Man's Only Guide To Salvation," occupied the balance of the time.

The time was occupied by the visiting authorities in the evening session. Sister Douglas spoke of the integrity of early pioneers and Church leaders. Sister Wallis told of her conversion to the Gospel and the blessings it had brought into her life. President Douglas stressed the importance of organizing and dividing the work among more of the members as Jethro advised Moses to do. Patriarch Wallis convincingly discussed the many revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith and related the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Inspirational hymns and musical selections were rendered, including an anthem by the District Choir.

The following Authorities and travelling Elders attended: Patriarch and Sister James H. Wallis of the European Mission; President and Sister James H. Douglas, Elders Percy L. Matthews and W. Lamar Phillips of the British Mission; President Elwood Corry and Elders Robert L. Bridge, C. Leigh Miller, Henry Groom, Eliot D. Ward and B. Fred Pulham of the Birmingham District; Elders Clifford G. Green and Hugh D. Higgins of the Welsh District, and Elder Lonis W. Meadows of the Hull District.

ROBERT L. BRIDGE, Clerk of Conference.

CHURCH WIDE NEWS

DEMONSTRATING modern possibilities for teaching religion, officers and teachers of the Sunday School training institute which convened a short time ago in Salt Lake City, were greeted from the talking screen by President Heber J. Grant and President Anthony W. Ivins.

DESCENDANTS of President John Taylor, third president of the Church, observed his 124th birthday anniversary at a friendly reunion November 1st, in Salt Lake City. President Taylor was born November 1st, 1808, at Milnthorpe, Westmorland county, England, and in the fall of 1847 led a party of British immigrants to Utah.

THE growth experienced the past year by the Primary organization of the various missions has been outstanding, according to a report compiled by the General Board of that organization. Growth is accredited to an extensive programme introduced into the missions through the mission presidents who assembled at general conference in October, 1931.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Branch Conferences: Of the Hexham Branch, Newcastle District, November 6th. A large attendance and a commendable spirit marked the event.

Of the Merthyr Tydfil Branch, Welsh District, October 30th. A programme, embracing songs and recitations by the children and addresses by several of the local members, was very interesting.

Of the Pontllanfraith Branch, Welsh District, November 6th. A sweet spirit was felt during the evening.

Of the Bootle Branch, Liverpool District. November 13th. Under the supervision of local Branch President Reginald L. McGhee, the theme, "Life of Christ," was inspirationally discussed.

LET SOMETHING GOOD BE SAID

WHEN over the fair fame of friend or foe
 The shadow of disgrace shall fall; instead
 Of words of blame, or proof of so and so,
 Let something good be said.

Forget not that no fellow-being yet
 May fall so low but love may lift his head;
 Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet,
 If something good be said.

No generous heart may vainly turn aside
 In ways of sympathy; no soul so dead
 But may awaken strong and glorified,
 If something good be said.

And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,
 And by the cross on which the Saviour bled,
 And by your own soul's hope for fair renown,
 Let something good be said.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

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